

In attempting to give a brief summary of psycho-analytic theory as it now stands, and as I have used it for the interpretation of my data, I will begin not from the psychological situation of the adult, or the chronological sequence of psycho-analytic discoveries, but directly from the infant's experience as we now understand it. This view of the infant's situation is based partly on direct observations, partly on inferences and reconstructions justified by the direct analytic study of children of all ages, and adults.

The Psychological Situation of the Infant

I may begin by quoting an illuminating passage from a recent important paper by M. N. Searl,¹ in which the fundamental psychic situation of the very young human child is set out more clearly than has elsewhere been done :

" We start, then, with a fact too familiar to us all to need further demonstration from either poetry or science : the fact that there can exist in a child a world of feeling, or emotion, completely inaccessible to reason : that there can be an apparently unbridgeable gap between emotion and reality. This fact seems to me the kernel of all difficulties of development. It is of far more frequent and universal occurrence than we are inclined to believe. To approach it with some understanding we need to take a brief survey of the child's early years from this angle.

" An infant normally has few and simple, but urgent and imperative, desires connected with strong feelings. He has, however, no power to satisfy these more urgent desires without the help of mother or nurse. He has no power to know anything of the whys and wherefores of any lack of satisfaction. When he has what he wants he has the feeling

'good'¹. When he has not what he wants he has the feeling 'bad'. Similarly the person or object from whom he gets what he wants feels to him 'good'; the person or object from whom he does not get what he wants feels to him 'bad'.*

¹ M. N. Searl, "Some Contrasted Aspects of Psycho-Analysis and Education," *B. J. of Educational Psychology*, Vol. II.

² This distinction between what is "good" and what is "bad", based in the first instance upon the experience of satisfaction or frustration of fundamental wishes, runs all through the child's *unconscious* mental life even in later development. Everything, in the concrete thought of early childhood, falls into this pattern—not only his parents, and the parent-self within him may become "good"